

GAVEL TO GAVEL

A Guide To The
Televised Proceedings
of Congress

BEHIND THE SCENES

A Brief Tour Through the Halls of Congress

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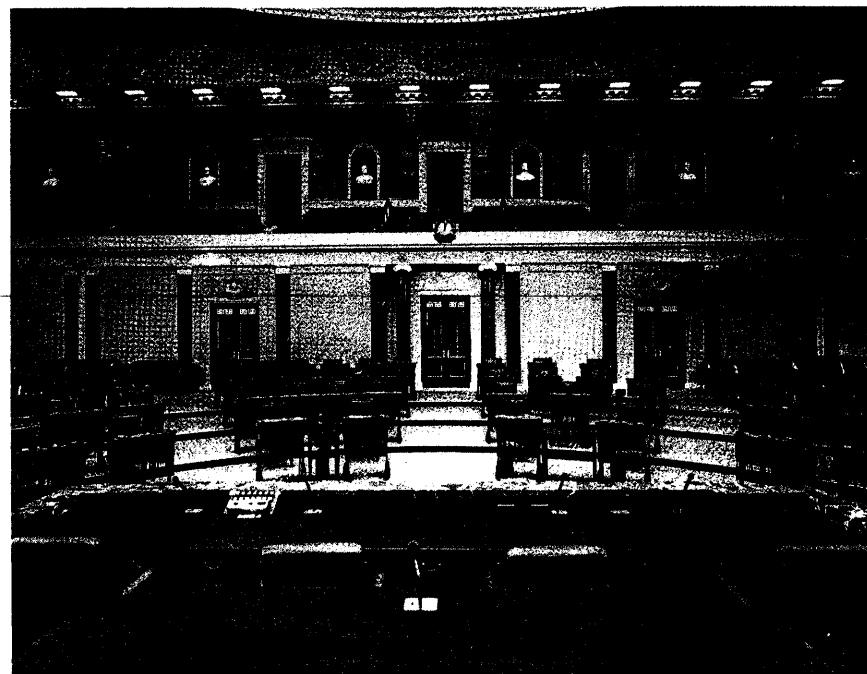
From special control rooms within the Capitol, employees of the House and Senate recording studios operate the unattended color television cameras that capture action in the Chambers. By remote control, these technicians determine camera angles; adjust the sound, lights, and color of the broadcast image; and add brief captions. In the House, six cameras, placed at strategic points in the galleries above the floor, generally are directed at major points of activity below: the Speaker's rostrum, the majority and minority leadership tables, the lecterns from which Members speak, and so forth. In the smaller Senate Chamber, where Senators speak from their assigned desks, six cameras positioned in the gallery rotate to follow debate from all over the floor.

While the cameras "never blink," they do not cover a significant amount of informal legislative activity around the periphery of the Chambers and in the corridors and rooms adjoining them. Even though access to the House and Senate floors is tightly restricted, people continuously move in and out of camera range. In fact, what you see on the TV screen during important debates may at times resemble controlled pandemonium. Here are a few pointers to help you keep track of what's going on, starting with the House of Representatives:

The young people in navy-blue suits rushing in and out of the House Chamber (they perform similar duties in the Senate) are official pages—high school students who deliver documents and messages, run errands for Members, and help out in various House offices. They wait for assignments, out of camera range, at desks in rear corners of the Chamber (Democrats and Republicans each have their own set of pages).

Behind the railings at the rear of the Chamber are the Democratic and Republican cloakrooms. Here, Members may relax, have a snack, use the telephones, and prepare themselves for the time their bill or amendment will be brought up on the floor. One level up from the House floor are special lounges where Members may read, chat with visitors or reporters, or look over and revise their remarks and galley proofs for the *Congressional Record*. Women serving in the House of Representatives have a special lounge (located between Statuary Hall and the Capitol Rotunda) complete with a few desks, kitchen facilities, and portraits of all women who have served in Congress.

The doorways at the left and right of the three-tiered dais lead to the Speaker's Lobby, a large, ornate room where Members may relax and chat with one another, or with staff members and reporters. The Speaker's Lobby has newspa-



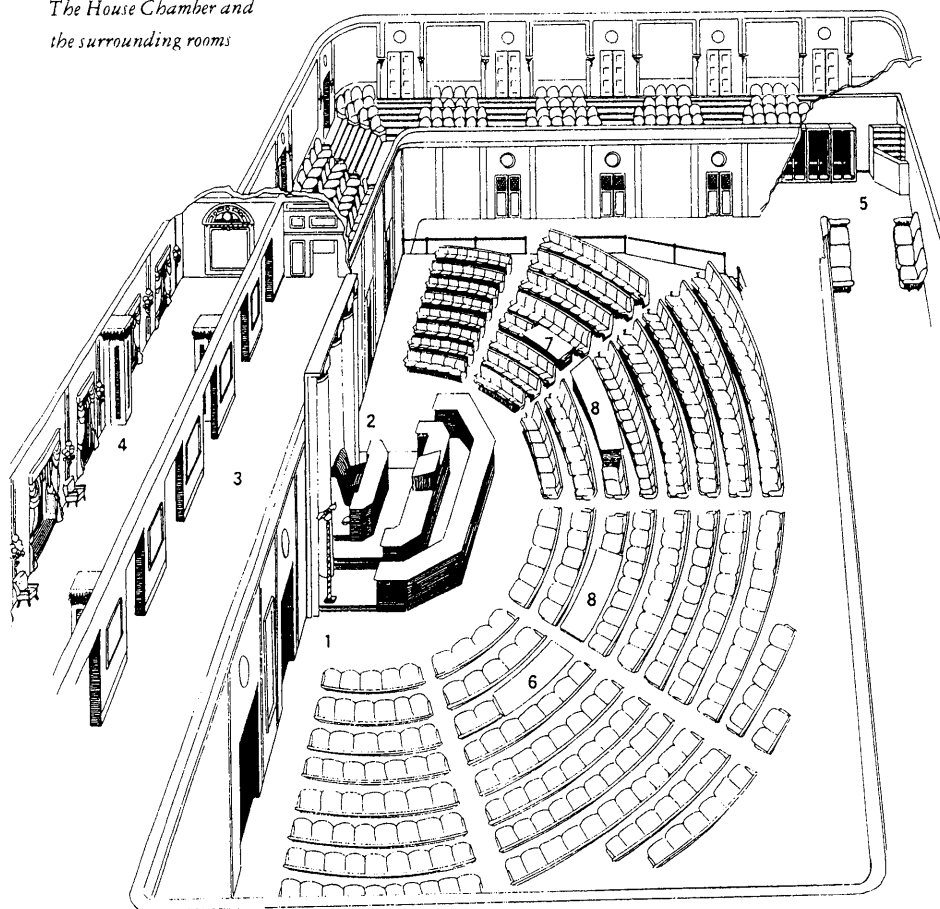
The Senate floor from the presiding officer's vantage point



Galleries reserved for reporters, congressional staff, Members' families, and the public ring the Chambers

The House of Representatives

The House Chamber and the surrounding rooms



1. The Mace
2. Speaker of the House
3. Speaker's Lobby
4. Members' Reading Rooms

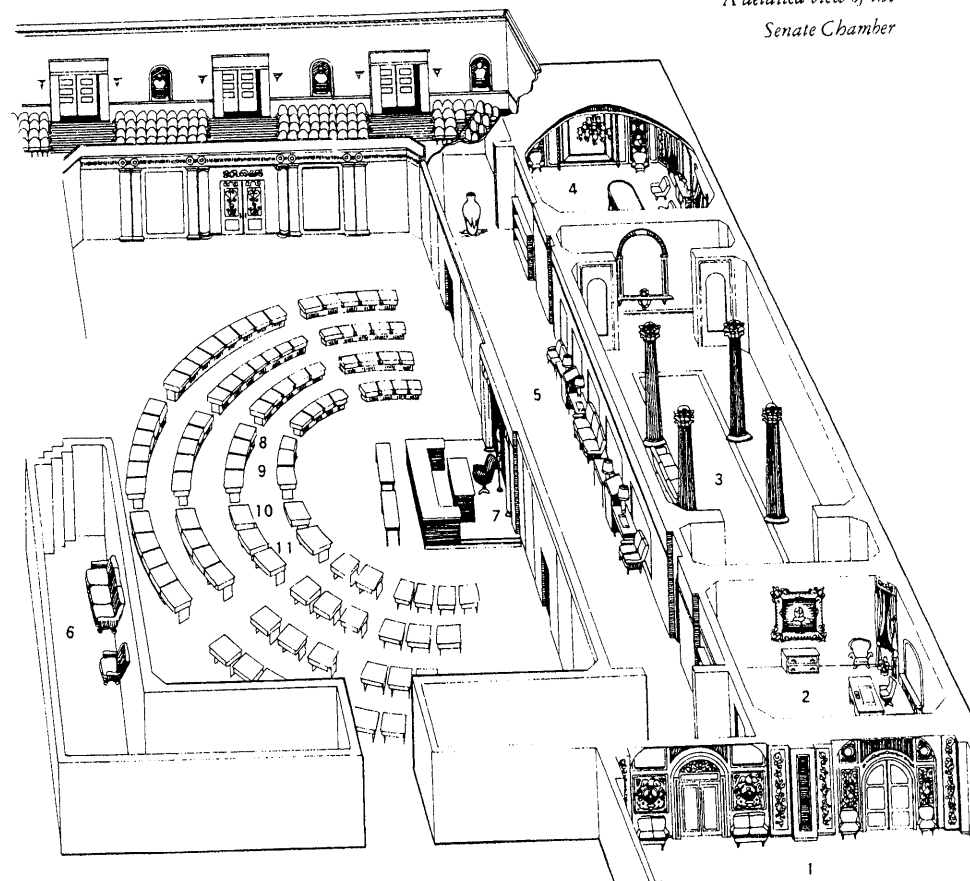
5. Republican Cloakroom
6. Democratic Leadership Table
7. Republican Leadership Table
8. Committee Tables

pers and a wire-service ticker, but no cameras or recording devices are permitted inside (reporters, in fact, are prohibited from writing about any conversations overheard in this area). Here, Members also have easy access to a special library and reading rooms.

Members of the House and support personnel (stenographers, pages, employees of the Doorkeeper, and so forth) enter the floor from many different locations. Many already will be in the Speaker's Lobby or cloakrooms—just a few steps from the floor. Others will be arriving from the three major House

The Senate

A detailed view of the Senate Chamber



1. Senate Reception Room
2. Vice-President's Room
3. The Marble Room
4. The President's Room
5. Senate Lobby
6. Republican Cloakroom

7. The Presiding Officer
8. Democratic Whip
9. Democratic Leader
10. Republican Leader
11. Republican Whip

office buildings—Rayburn, Longworth, and Cannon—and from other places within the Capitol itself. As a special system of bells (see box, page 15) alerts them to an impending quorum call or vote, many Members will be entering the floor from the far right or far left, corresponding to their party's side. Lobbyists and congressional staffers, cordoned off from the corridors, often wait outside the entrances to have a few words with Members on their way in.

Members cast their votes at any of the 44 voting stations attached to the backs of seats, or in the well by giving a signed card to the Tally Clerk, who

enters the vote by using the console on the dais. (See page 48 for an explanation of the electronic voting system.) A special video terminal and printer are located in the rear of the Chamber for Members interested in keeping tabs on various voting statistics.

Like the House Chamber, the Senate Chamber is surrounded by a number of private rooms and offices. Directly behind the rostrum, from which the presiding officer directs floor activity, is the Senate Lobby. Doors on either side of the rostrum lead directly to this room, where Senators can relax, make telephone calls, or check the wire-service ticker. Senators also can speak freely here: the Senate Lobby is considered part of the Senate floor, meaning public access is limited.

Directly behind the Senate Lobby is the Marble Room, another private area officially designated as part of the Senate floor, and off limits to all but Senators. Two ornate ceremonial offices flank the Marble Room: the President's Room to

the left, where Senators often hold press conferences, and the Formal Office of the Vice President to the right.

Doors on either side at the rear of the Chamber lead to the Democratic and Republican cloakrooms, where Senators may relax, make phone calls, or prepare for debate. To the left of the Chamber are the offices of the Secretary of the Senate and others under the Secretary's jurisdiction: the Chief Clerk, the Bill Clerk and Journal Clerk, and the Official Reporters of Debates, whose employees move on and off the floor. To the right of the Chamber are the offices of the Vice President and the Senate Majority Leader, and the Senate Reception Room, where Senators may meet with reporters, constituents, and other visitors.

Although the floor of the Senate sometimes looks somewhat empty, most Senators usually are not far away. Many of them likely will be in one of the three major Senate office buildings—Dirksen, Russell, and Hart—where much of

CONGRESS: THE BASICS

The United States Congress consists of two branches—the Senate and the House of Representatives. The chief function of Congress is the making of laws. In addition, the Senate has the function of advising and consenting to treaties and to certain nominations by the President.

In the matter of impeachments, the House of Representatives presents the charges—a function similar to that of a grand jury—and the Senate sits as a court to try the impeachment. Under the Constitution, top federal officials—including Presidents, vice presidents, Supreme Court justices, and federal judges—can be removed from office by impeachment for such reasons as “treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors.” In order to remove such officials, two-thirds of the Senate must vote for conviction. Throughout history, the House has only voted articles of impeachment against 14 federal officials, 11 of whom were federal judges; some were acquitted, one case was thrown out by the Senate, and three defendants resigned during the proceedings.

Unlike some other parliamentary bodies, both the House and Senate have equal legislative functions and powers—except only the House may initiate reve-

nue bills and traditionally initiates appropriations bills, which provide for funds for carrying on the work of the government.

The Congress meets at least once a year, and has been doing so since 1789, first in New York City and then in Philadelphia. Since November 17, 1800, it has conducted its business in The Capitol, in Washington, D.C.

The Senate is composed of 100 Members. Each state, regardless of area or population, is entitled under the Constitution to two Senators. The Senate is presided over by the Vice President of the United States, who is President of the Senate. In his absence, the President *pro tempore*, who is elected by his fellow Senators, assumes that role. However, the President *pro tempore* may—and often does—appoint other Senators to act as presiding officer.

Senators are elected for terms of six years and are divided into three “classes,” so that the terms of approximately one-third expire every two years. The terms of both Senators from a particular state are arranged so they don’t terminate at the same time. The one elected first is referred to as the “senior” Senator from that state; the other is referred to as the “junior” Senator.

Membership of the House is apportioned on the basis of population of the states, the number fixed at 435. Each state has at least one Representative. The House is presided over by the Speaker, who is chosen by its Members at the beginning of a Congress.

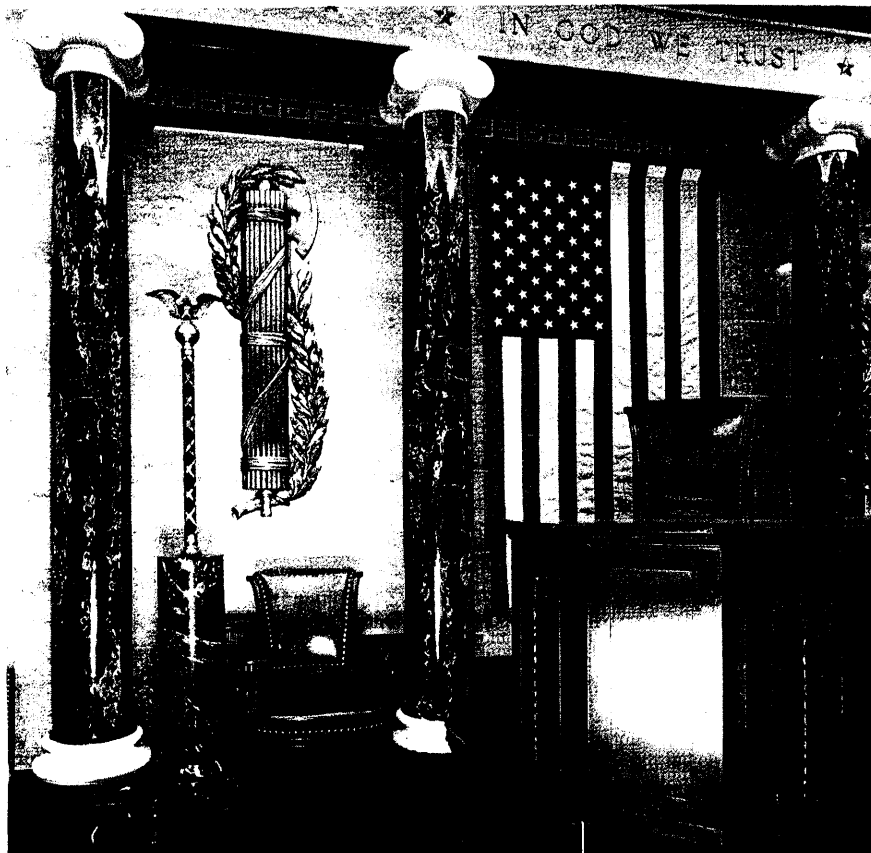
In addition to these 435 Members of the House, there are in that body a Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, and one Delegate each from American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Unofficially, they also are known as Members of Congress. They have the same rights and privileges as a Representative with respect to attending sessions of the House, engaging in debate, and serving on committees (they may even be committee chairmen). They do not have the right to vote in the House, but may vote in committee.

The life span of a Congress is two years. The Constitution mandates that each body will convene its regular session at noon on January 3, unless by law Congress chooses another day. Each Congress has at least two sessions. In recent years, the first session has usually lasted until just before Christmas, while the second usually has finished up early in the fall, before the new elections. The President may call a special session of

Congress, or of either body, if he deems it necessary. A continuation of the second session of Congress that convenes after an election is known as a “lame duck” session.

Both Houses ordinarily meet at noon each day, but either may—and often does—change its hour of meeting. Each House terminates its daily session at its own pleasure, usually by 6:00 p.m.; evening sessions are held when work dictates. Neither House may recess or adjourn for more than three days without the consent of the other.

Bills and resolutions started on their way to enactment, but left unfinished at the end of the first session of Congress, are taken up again at the next session as if no adjournment had taken place. If final action has not been taken at the end of a Congress, however, the measures simply die. Treaties and protocols, which are considered by the Senate only, do not die, but remain from Congress to Congress until disposed of. (Their consideration must be resumed anew at the beginning of the next Congress.) Nominations not acted on in a session die and must be resubmitted to the Senate at the next session. A recess for more than 30 days also requires nominations to be returned to the President.



The mace, the House of Representatives' symbol of parliamentary power and authority, on the marble pedestal

their committee and constituent business takes place. (Senators and Representatives, who often have to beat the clock for floor votes, can get to the Chamber quickly via Congress' own subway system, which links House and Senate office buildings to the Capitol.) In addition, many Senators have private offices in the Capitol, where they can be found conducting business. Others may be in the Senators' Lobby planning legislative strategy; some might be just beyond the Chamber, conferring with lobbyists or staff members, or talking with reporters. There is even a Prayer Room, not far from the Capitol Rotunda, which may be used by Members of the House and Senate.

The televised proceedings of Congress are, in essence, an electronic extension of the galleries above the Chambers. Galleries are set aside for newspaper, periodical, and broadcast reporters; congressional staff; Diplomatic corps; Members' families; and visitors to Congress. Only reporters are permitted to read, write, or talk with others in the galleries.

At some point, of course, you may wish to see congressional proceedings in person. In that case, you'll probably be watching from one of the visitors' galleries, after obtaining a special pass from your Representative or Senator.

THE SCHEDULE ON THE SCREEN

A Guide to Order in Congress

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Although what happens on the floor of the Senate and the House of Representatives may at times seem haphazard, the sequence of events for daily sessions follows an orderly pattern, in part prescribed by the rules of each body. Both Houses generally convene at noon, because committees and subcommittees meet in the morning, starting as early as 9:00 a.m. (Some, like conference committees, often meet while one or both Houses are in session). Here is a brief "road map" to a typical day's activities.

The House

Opening prayer. After the Speaker (or his designee, the Speaker *pro tempore*) brings the House to order, a prayer is delivered by the Chaplain or a visiting clergyman.

The Journal. The Journal, rather than the *Congressional Record*, is the official record of the proceedings of the House. At the beginning of each session, the Speaker simply announces his approval of the Journal of the preceding day, in which case a Member may demand a vote on its approval. A Member also may object to the absence of a quorum, which generally leads to the first roll-call vote of the day on the Journal's approval.

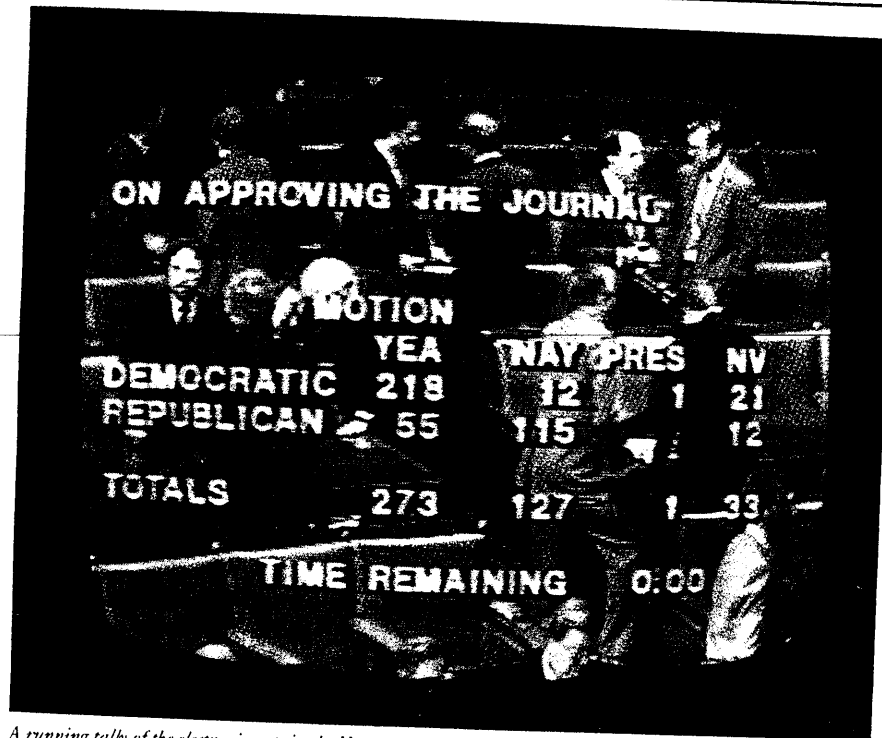
Disposing of business on the Speaker's table. The Speaker may receive special messages from the President or the Senate, he may refer communications from heads of departments and agencies, and he may announce appointments he has made. The Doorkeeper of the House announces and escorts the messenger into the Chamber; the messenger bows to the chair, and announces the title of messages he is delivering. Messages from the Senate might range from special observances—"National Peach Month" or "Afghanistan Day," for example—to votes on conference committee reports and appointments to conference committees. Later, the Speaker will refer these matters to the proper committee or hold them at the Speaker's table.

One-minute speeches. As a courtesy and tradition, the Speaker may recognize Members to address the Chamber on any subject they wish—alternating be-

THE LEGISLATIVE LABYRINTH

How A Bill Becomes Law

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A running tally of the electronic vote in the House is displayed on your TV screen

action. But if the Senate votes to grant the motion to reconsider it may, by a majority vote, either affirm its action, which then becomes final, or reverse it.

Deliberation on the next issue. Following a vote, the Senate may consider other legislation, it may transact routine morning business, it may consider executive matters, or it may recess or adjourn.

Before the Senate does recess each day, a good bit of other routine business will be taken care of. Committee chairmen, for example, may announce the next day's hearing schedule, and statements will be prepared for insertion in the *Congressional Record*. In addition, the following day's schedule—as determined by the Majority Leader—will be announced. This will include the time for reconvening, a list of Senators who will be speaking under special orders, the time that routine morning business will end, and the bill to be considered at the conclusion of morning business. It also will include other important items on the schedule, such as agreed-upon recesses for weekly party caucuses or other meetings.

Recess. "Mr. President, I now move that the Senate stand in recess until 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, June 3, 1986." That's the simple form in which the Senate ends its official business for the day—in this case, the historic day that the Senate opened up its Chamber to televised proceedings. By custom, the motion is usually offered by the Majority Leader or his designee. The Senate may also adjourn, but customarily goes into recess instead.

Before a bill ever reaches the House or Senate floor, it is put through a series of rigorous tests, each of which may prove an insurmountable barrier. Written comments often are solicited and public hearings held, giving interested parties an opportunity to express opinions about provisions in the legislation. There are subcommittee and full committee votes. There is the matter of scheduling a bill for floor debate. And if a bill makes it that far in the process—and the majority of bills don't—there are intricate parliamentary procedures that opponents can use to prevent its consideration and passage.

It is, in short, a process rife with potential pitfalls, and final approval by one House in no way assures that a bill will be enacted into law, since a similar process will have to be completed by the other body. If the two Houses of Congress disagree over portions of the bill, it may be sent to a conference committee for compromise. So the action a viewer sees in the each Chamber is just one step in a long, exacting process that involves considerable time, energy, and expertise. But the televised action is, in many ways, the make-it-or-break-it point in the life of a bill, and it is at this juncture that the laws of the land are ultimately shaped. Here, then, is a look at how that entire process unfolds.

Introduction and sponsorship. During each two-year Congress, our nation's legislators introduce thousands of new proposals that eventually could become law (the most common form is the bill). The idea for a bill may originate anywhere—with the executive branch, interest groups, corporations, labor unions, congressional committees, or even private citizens, although only Members of Congress, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, and Delegates from American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands may actually introduce legislation for formal consideration.

In recent history, the President and his administration have been responsible for the bulk of legislative proposals acted on by Congress. Each year, for example, federal departments and agencies submit proposals based on the President's course for the country as outlined in his annual State of the Union message. In addition, the President each year transmits the proposed budget to Congress, which serves as the basis for several appropriations bills drafted by the House Committee on Appropriations after hearings by that committee and its Senate counterpart.

No matter where the legislative proposals originate, though, they follow similar—although by no means exact—paths through Congress. After carefully hammering out specific legislative language, often with the assistance of the Legislative Counsel of the House or Senate, a Member will have the original bill typed on a special form, which includes the names of all those who have signed on as co-sponsors. In the House, the bill is then simply dropped in the hopper beside the House Clerk's desk; in the Senate, Members customarily present bills to the clerks at the Presiding Officer's desk for processing, although Senators occasionally introduce bills from the floor with statements about their content and importance.

The bill's title is subsequently entered in the Journal—each body's official record of its proceedings—and assigned a permanent legislative number—a label often referred to by Members during debate in lieu of the title. A bill originating in the House is designated by the letters "H.R." followed by the assigned

number, while a Senate bill is designated by the letter "S." followed by its number. Numbers are assigned sequentially, in order of introduction, beginning each Congress with number "1."

The next day, the bill appears by title in the *Congressional Record*, along with the name of the committee or committees to which it has been referred—a determination made by the Speaker of the House or, in the Senate, by the Presiding Officer, upon the recommendations of the Parliamentarians. The bill is then sent to the Government Printing Office; shortly thereafter, printed copies are sent to the House and Senate document rooms, where they are made available to Members' offices and the public. In addition, a copy of the bill is sent to the committee to which it has been referred, where it is entered on the committee's Calendar of Business.

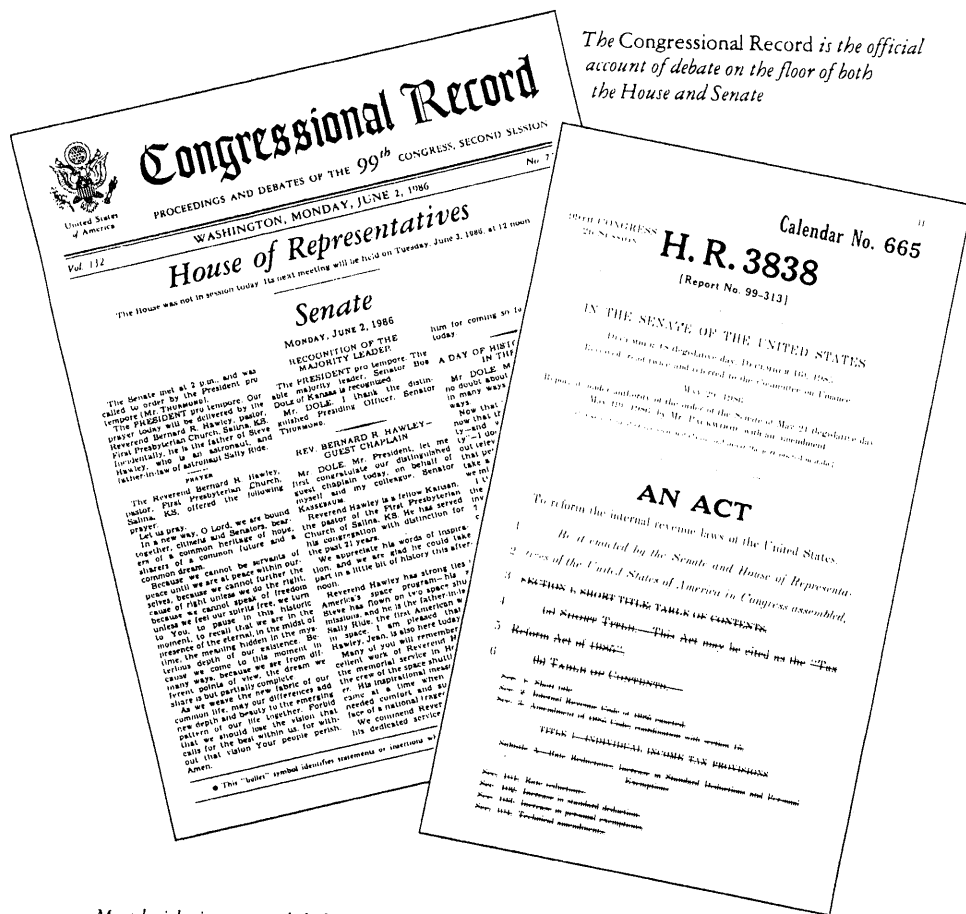
Committee action. The committee system is, in effect, the backbone of Congress. It is in committees and subcommittees that bills are closely scrutinized and comments—both from the public and appropriate government agencies—solicited. (There are now 22 permanent "standing" committees in the House and 16 in the Senate. There are also several select committees in each House, which are usually established for a limited period and generally for a strictly limited purpose; and four joint committees, composed of Senators and Representatives, which do not have legislative jurisdiction.) It is here that Members with expertise or interest in a particular subject have an opportunity to advance, modify, or kill a pending piece of legislation. Committee and subcommittee chairmen wield great power. They may decide, for example, to do nothing with a bill, in which case it "dies" at the end of a Congress.

Bills are routinely referred to committees with the appropriate jurisdiction over the subject matter, and then routed to a subcommittee with an even narrower focus. (Some Senate committees have no subcommittees; all work is instead done by the full committees.) A bill proposing to change license requirements for television stations, for example, would be referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and then sent to its Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Consumer Protection and Finance. A similar bill in the Senate would be referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and subsequently to the Communications Subcommittee. Here real scrutiny of the bill begins.

The subcommittee staff sometimes solicits comments on the proposal from a wide range of experts: government agencies, affected industries, trade associations, citizen groups, and the like. If the subcommittee's chairman or its members believe the bill deserves an even closer look, and if time allows, public hearings on the bill will be scheduled. Once again, the subcommittee will listen to the views of interested parties—this time in a public forum, with Members given an opportunity to question witnesses. (A committee may go into executive session and close a hearing to the public, but this is usually done only when there is a threat of endangering national security or incriminating a witness.)

When hearings have been completed, a subcommittee will schedule a "mark-up" session to decide whether to move the bill along to the next step in the process: consideration by the full committee. At a mark-up, which also is usually open to the public, Members vote on whether to approve the bill as worded, amend it, rewrite it, or postpone action indefinitely.

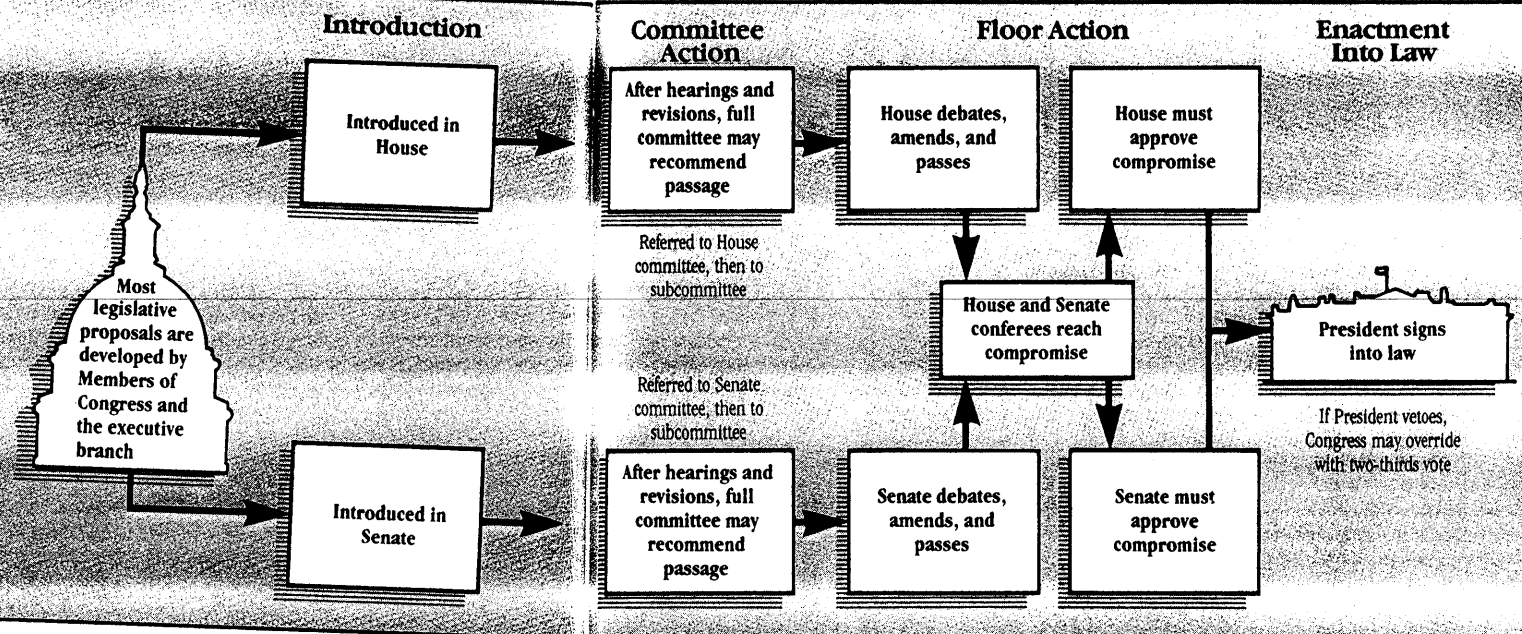
The Congressional Record is the official account of debate on the floor of both the House and Senate



Most legislative proposals before Congress are in the form of bills, and are designated as H.R. (House of Representatives) or S. (Senate) according to the body in which they originate

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

Here's a typical—but greatly simplified—"legislative road map" showing how bills are enacted into law. Most proposals, however, never make it through this legislative labyrinth. In the 98th Congress, for example, of the 9,769 public bills and joint resolutions introduced in both Houses, only 623 (6.4 percent) were enacted into law.



If the bill is sent to the full committee, it may hold its own hearings, or it may proceed to a mark-up and a final vote. The full committee often will review supporting material submitted by the subcommittee, and it may then choose to either table the bill or "report it" to the House or Senate, with or without amendments. Since tabling a bill will ordinarily prevent further action, adverse reports by the full committee are usually considered unnecessary. Occasionally, however, a committee may report a bill unfavorably.

When a committee reports a bill favorably to the full House or Senate, it sends with it a written report describing the purpose of the bill, committee amendments, any minority views, the opinions of other government officials whose views had been solicited, and the committee's reasons for recommended approval. Consequently, these reports form a very important part of the legislative history of the bill, which assumes great significance when courts use it to interpret congressional intent. Like bills, reports are assigned a number, printed, and made available for congressional and public study.

Up to this point, legislation introduced in both Houses of Congress follows similar routes. But this is where the similarities end. The House and Senate procedures for bringing a bill to the floor are entirely different, as are the rules for debate and amending a bill. Here is a description of what happens next in both bodies:

The House

Granting a rule. In large measure, the 13 Members of the House who sit on its powerful Rules Committee determine whether to permit consideration of a par-

ticular piece of legislation, and then establish the parameters of debate before the bill reaches the floor. Because most controversial pieces of legislation are sent there, the Rules Committee often has been described as the "traffic cop" of the House. (Not all bills require a rule from the Rules Committee to permit consideration, but some require rules to waive points of order against certain provisions.) Following an open hearing (in which the merits of the bill are often discussed), the bill generally will be assigned a debate rule. That rule carefully outlines whether any amendments will be permitted, how long those amendments may be debated, and sometimes even the order in which they may be considered.

It is, without question, a complicated process—but an entirely necessary one in a legislative body with 435 Members. In fact, to keep track of all its pending business (before committees or either Chamber), the House uses five legislative calendars. Under the calendar system, Members sponsoring legislation considered noncontroversial or bills dealing with private matters (claims against the government, immigration, land titles, and the like) may bypass the Rules Committee and gain floor consideration if they have been reported from the committee. Bills on the Consent Calendar, which must be noncontroversial, normally are called on the first and third Mondays of each month; bills on the Private Calendar, the first and third Tuesdays. But if there are sufficient objections, the measure being considered will be postponed or taken off the calendar, and its backers will seek other methods of getting it to the floor. The two basic procedures are a "suspension of the rules" or a special order of the Rules Committee.

Suspension of the Rules. While the term suggests some sort of parliamentary free-for-all, it actually embodies a new set of restrictions for consideration of

legislation on the floor. It is a valuable way to expedite consideration of important—but not highly controversial—bills. A motion to suspend the rules is in order on every Monday and Tuesday and during the last six days of every session. Debate is limited to 40 minutes (20 minutes on each side of the issue), and no separate amendments from the floor are permitted. (Committee amendments, however, are often included in the motion, and two-thirds of those present must vote for passage.) If the bill fails, it may be considered later under special order procedures, usually the granting of a rule.

Special orders of the Rules Committee. In essence, the Rules Committee, which functions as an arm of the Speaker, has a range of choices: it may, for example, send a bill to the floor under the normal “open rule,” which allows unlimited germane floor amendments debated under the five-minute rule. Among the special rules the committee can provide is a “closed rule,” which prohibits all amendments, except perhaps for committee amendments and *pro forma* amendments offered only for purposes of debate. In addition, the committee can propose a variety of other restrictive special rules, which may prohibit or permit only certain amendments. These provisions can be very important, because they can prevent Representatives from offering amendments as alternatives to provisions of the bill, thereby limiting the policy choices that the House can make.

The Rules Committee sets the parameters of how the legislation will be debated once it reaches the floor; the House then debates each special rule and votes to adopt it or reject it. In the event a rule is defeated, the legislation dies. One other parliamentary matter of interest: if a rule is brought to the floor the same day it is reported by the Rules Committee, a two-thirds vote is required for consideration. More often, though, a rule “lies over” at least 24 hours, and only a majority vote is needed for adoption.

The resolution of disagreement over the rule paves the way for a bill to be brought for a vote on the floor. By the time of the final roll-call vote on the rule, many other issues—the rule itself, amendments, the length of time for general debate, and even the manner of voting—will have been decided. The voting process has been greatly streamlined in recent years, but many Members still complain about what they view as an endless string of quorum calls and recorded votes on inconsequential matters.

The Senate

The process by which the Senate brings legislation to the floor differs considerably from that of the House. Here are the specifics:

Scheduling legislative business. When one or more of the Senate’s standing committees reports a bill to the Senate floor for debate and passage, the bill is placed on the Senate Calendar of Business—under the heading of “General Orders.” The Senate gives its Majority Leader the primary responsibility for deciding the order in which bills on the Calendar should come to the floor for action.

Whenever possible, bills reach the Senate floor not by motion, but by unani-

mous consent. The motion to consider a bill usually is debatable and, therefore, subject to filibuster. Even before the bill can reach the floor, and perhaps face a filibuster, there may be extended debate on the question of whether or not the Senate should even consider the bill.

It is to avoid this possibility that the Majority Leader attempts to get all Senators to agree by unanimous consent to take up the bill he wishes to have debated. If Senators withhold their consent, they are implicitly threatening extended debate on the question of considering the bill. Senators may do so because they oppose the bill, or because they wish to delay consideration of one measure in the hope of influencing the fate of some other, often unrelated, measure. A single Senator may even place a “hold” on a bill, by which he asks his party’s floor leader to object on his behalf to any unanimous consent request to consider the bill—at least until he has been consulted.

In attempting to devise a schedule for the Senate floor, the Majority Leader seeks to promote the legislative program of his party (and perhaps the President, if they are both of the same party), as he also tries to ensure that the Senate considers necessary legislation in a timely fashion. But when he is confronted with two bills, one of which can be brought up by unanimous consent and the other of which cannot, he is naturally inclined to ask the Senate to take up the bill that can be considered without objection. Some bills, of course, are too important to be delayed because some Senators object to considering them. But most are not, especially if the objections can be met through negotiation and compromise. Thus, the possibility of extended debate affects decisions for scheduling legislation in two ways: by discouraging the Majority Leader and the Senate from attempting to take up bills to which some Senators object, and by encouraging negotiations over substantive changes in the bills in order to meet their objections.

Submitting a report. Unlike its House counterpart, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration does not determine whether legislation should be scheduled for floor debate. At the time a bill is reported by the relevant committee, the Senator making the report may ask unanimous consent for the immediate consideration of the bill. If the bill is noncontroversial and there is no objection, the Senate may pass the measure with little or no debate—and with only a brief explanation of its purpose and effect. Such a procedure does allow for amendments, however, which may be introduced by any Senator. A simple majority vote is required to carry an amendment and pass the bill. If there is any objection, the report must lie over one legislative day and the bill is placed on the calendar.

Call of the Calendar. A bill on the Senate Calendar of business may be called up for action in various ways. It may be called up out of order by unanimous consent, which speeds up Senate business. Large numbers of bills also may be disposed of on call of the Calendar—a special procedure used to consider a number of unobjected to bills and resolutions pending on the calendar. Under this procedure, the proposals are not debated. Furthermore, no Senator may be recognized for more than five minutes on each bill, and no roll-call votes are taken. The bills are merely called up one after another and passed “without objection.” Bills remain on the Calendar until disposed of by the Senate, or until

the last session of a Congress adjourns *sine die*, which clears out all measures on the calendar.

Time agreements. To avoid endless debate on measures considered by the Senate, complex unanimous consent agreements—often called “time agreements”—are frequently worked out by committee chairmen and party leaders. For example, such agreements may prohibit the introduction of non-germane amendments, they may limit the number of Senators permitted to speak on each question, or they may put a strict limitation on the time available for debating the bill and every question that may arise during its consideration. Such agreements cannot be imposed on the Senate by any vote of that body, but rather require the concurrence of every Member. Any Senator who is dissatisfied with the terms of a proposed time agreement has only to object, and the standing rules remain in force. As a result, time agreements often include exceptions to their general provisions in order to satisfy individual Senators.

The Senate often begins consideration of bills without having reached a time limitation agreement. In some cases, the floor managers expect few amendments and relatively little debate, making an elaborate agreement unnecessary. In other cases, the Majority Leader and committee chairman seek an agreement unsuccessfully, but proceed with the bill anyway because of its timeliness and importance. After the Senate has debated such a bill and controversial amendments—perhaps for days—the leaders often renew their attempts to reach an overall agreement limiting debate on each amendment, or an agreement setting a time for the Senate to vote on whether to pass the bill. If no such overall agreement can be reached, they often try to arrange unanimous consent agreements for more limited purposes while the Senate is debating a bill—time limits on individual amendments, temporarily setting aside one amendment to consider another, and so on.

The amending process is at the heart of the Senate’s floor deliberations, and such agreements over amendments pave the way for a final vote on a bill. In fact, if the Senate reaches a final vote on passing or defeating a bill, the bill is very likely to pass.

Further Action

Once a bill passes the House or Senate, it is transmitted to the other Chamber in a rather formal ceremony (similar to the procedure under which messages are delivered from the President). There it follows a similarly labyrinthine path to final deliberations. (After the passage of a bill by one body, it technically becomes an “act”—not yet effective as a law—but it nevertheless continues to be generally referred to as a bill.)

If a bill or resolution originates in the Senate, following passage it is messaged to the House and referred to a House committee; the committee reports it to the House and it is acted on by that body. If amended, it is returned to the Senate for concurrence in the House amendments. A bill or resolution originating in the House follows the same steps, except in reverse.

A bill cannot become the law of the land until it has been approved in identical terms by both Houses of Congress. So if there are differences between the



Senators Nancy L. Kassebaum and Richard G. Lugar question witnesses at a committee hearing

House and Senate versions when each body completes its deliberations, they may seek to work them out in conference (see the following section). Each body appoints conferees, usually drawn from the committee involved in the legislation. They meet and try to resolve disagreements. If they are unable to do so, new conferees may be chosen in an attempt to break the deadlock.

Once approved, the conference committee’s report, which represents all amendments between the Houses on which the conferees could agree, is sent back to each House for consideration.

After the House and Senate have passed a bill in exactly the same language, it is printed on parchment and transmitted to the President for his signature. The President may approve the bill simply by signing it, or he may veto it. If Congress is in session and the President does not veto the measure within 10 days and return it with his objections, the Constitution provides that it become law anyway. If, however, Congress has adjourned *sine die* and the President fails to sign a bill, it is known as a “pocket veto.” (In essence, Congress has prevented the bill’s return by virtue of its adjournment.)

If the President vetoes the bill, it is sent back to the House of origin with a message explaining why (the “veto message”). A vetoed bill is privileged, and generally is voted on at once—unless the vote is postponed or the bill is referred to committee, which normally kills the bill. If two-thirds of the House to which the vetoed bill has been sent agree to pass the bill, it is then sent to the other House. A two-thirds affirmative vote in that body is then required to override a presidential veto. Failure of either House to override sustains the veto.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

"The Third House of Congress"



Because of its critical role in the legislative process, the conference committee is often referred to as the "Third House of Congress."

The Constitution mandates that a bill cannot become the law of the land until it has been approved in identical terms by both Houses. If there are differences between a House and Senate bill when each body completes its deliberations, a conference committee may be called to hammer out an acceptable compromise.

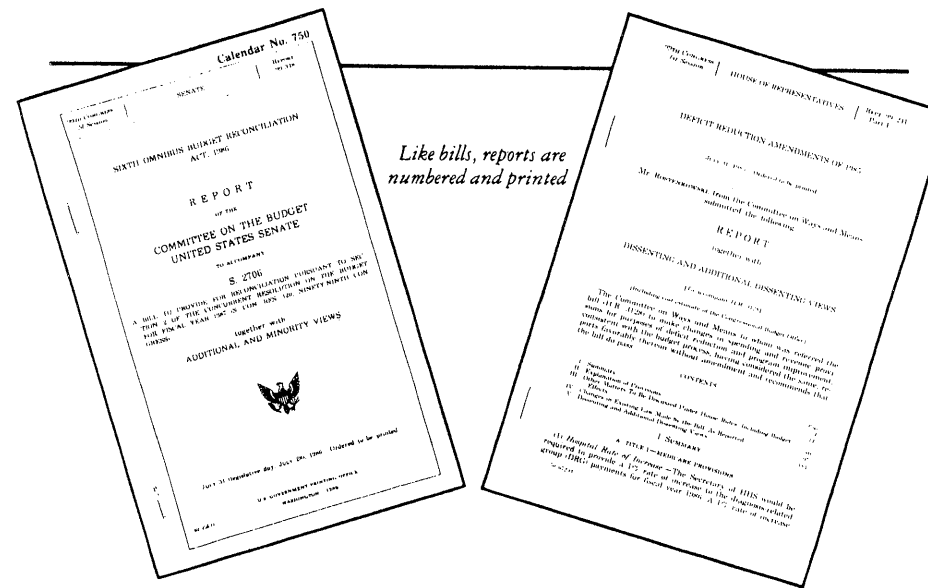
The conferees, known as "managers," are appointed by the Speaker of the House and, in the Senate, by unanimous consent by the Presiding Officer. Typically, a conference committee will have seven or eight Members from each body, representing both parties, all of whom will have had some responsibility for the legislation. Either House may appoint a larger number of conferees, but, because the conferees of each House vote as a unit, that does not offer any advantage. Whatever the size of the conference committee, though, a majority from each delegation must be from that body's majority party.

The meetings of the conferees are customarily held on the Senate side of the Capitol, and, unless a special vote is taken, are open to the public—including TV cameras.

The conferees are strictly limited in their consideration to matters in disagreement between the two Houses. In addition, conferees may be instructed, by a vote in Chamber, as to the position they are to take. Conferees technically are not bound by these instructions, but they are an indication of the sense of their body, and therefore they likely will pay attention to them.

After deliberations, which generally include intense negotiations, each side hoping to prevail in its positions, they may make one or more recommendations when reporting back to their respective bodies. For example, they may recommend that the House withdraw all or certain of its amendments, or that the Senate withdraw its disagreement to all or certain of the House amendments. Or they may report an inability to agree—in total or in part. Usually there is a compromise, but if no agreement can be reached, new conferees may be appointed in either or both Houses.

When the conferees, by a majority vote of each side, reach complete agreement (or agreement on some, but not all, amendments) they incorporate their recommendations in a report, written by the conference committee staff. Identical



Like bills, reports are numbered and printed

tical reports are filed in each House, along with a detailed and explicit statement informing Congress of the effect that the conferees' amendments or propositions will have on the original measure.

The conference report is not subject to amendment, and, following debate, generally must be accepted or rejected in its entirety. The House may vote separately, however, on amendments proposed by the Senate that may not be germane to the House-passed bill. If they don't agree on these amendments, the conference report is then rejected and a new conference may be convened, or the Senate may accept that portion of the House conference report rejected by the separate vote of the House.

House rules require that conference reports "lie over" at least three days to ensure that Members have time to study them before they vote. The House generally permits one hour of floor debate on the conference report itself; if any amendments are considered separately, they must be sent back to the Senate for approval or further conference. The Senate may act immediately on a conference report; if the time for debate on the adoption of the report is limited, the time allotted must be equally divided between the majority and minority parties.

If a conference report is rejected by either House, it so notifies the other body and usually requests another conference; however, it may merely notify the second body of its action without requesting a further conference, leaving further steps to be taken by the other House.

When the bill—either with or without amendments—has been agreed to in identical form by both Houses, it is delivered to the enrolling clerk of the House in which it originated. Along with the original "engrossed" bill—the bill as it passed the House in which it was introduced—the enrolling clerk receives the conference report, amendments, and all other pertinent papers. The enrolled bill, reflecting all changes adopted by both Houses, is then printed on parchment paper, signed by the Speaker of the House and then the President of the Senate, and delivered to the White House. The President may then approve the bill or veto it.

READING GUIDE

Keeping Tabs on Capitol Hill

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Congressional Picture Directory. This paperback guide is a useful companion for watching the televised proceedings of Congress; it may help you identify Members milling about on the floor or waiting to speak. For information, write: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Congressional Directory. The *Congressional Directory* gives biographies of each member of Congress, committee assignments, maps of the nation's 435 congressional districts, and much more—including a listing of all federal departments and agencies, with addresses, telephone numbers, and titles of officials. Senators and Representatives are listed by state, in alphabetical order by name, and by term of service. For information, write: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

The Almanac of American Politics (by Michael Barone and Grant Ujifusa) and **Politics in America** (Alan Ehrenhalt, editor). These reference books contain profiles of each Senator, Representative, and Governor, voting records on key issues, ratings by special interest groups, and in-depth analyses of each state and congressional district. Both books are available at most libraries and bookstores.

Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report and **National Journal.** CQ's *Weekly Report* probably is the best running account of what goes on in Congress. If you're interested in a quick overview of an issue before Congress, or an individual's voting record, this is the place to start. *National Journal* is a weekly periodical that reports and analyzes important executive branch and congressional actions. Both publications are available in most major libraries.

The U.S. Congress Handbook. This annual guide to Congress includes Members' pictures, biographies, and committee assignments, as well as information on Cabinet officers. Single copies are \$5.95, available from P.O. Box 566, McLean, Virginia 22101.

CIS Index. Since 1970, Congressional Information Service (a private research firm located in Bethesda, Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C.) has indexed summaries of hearings, reports, documents, committee prints, and other congressional publications. The information is arranged by committee. Indexes are by subject, name, witness, title, bill number, report and document numbers, and, in the annual volume, by the public law number. Many major libraries have the quarterly and annual volumes; some subscribe to CIS's weekly looseleaf service.

LEGISLATIVE LEXICON

A Glossary of Key Congressional Terms

★★★

Act. Legislation that has passed both Houses of Congress and has been signed by the President or passed over his veto, thus becoming law. An act also is a bill or joint resolution passed and engrossed by either House.

Adjournment Motion. A motion of the highest privilege, which is not debated, that allows each House to adjourn each day. To adjourn from day to day does not require a quorum, but to adjourn to a day certain does, if demanded.

Adjournment to a Day Certain. Adjournment under a motion or concurrent resolution which fixes the next time of meeting. Neither House may adjourn for more than three days without consent of the other. A session of Congress is not ended by adjournment to a day certain.

Adjournment Sine Die. Adjournment without setting a definite date for reconvening, it usually signifies the final adjournment of a session of Congress. A new session usually begins on January 3 and can continue until January 3 of the following year, but the convening date may be changed by majority vote of both Houses, enacted into law.

Administration Bill. An informal designation indicating that the bill is part of the President's program.

Amendment. Proposal of a Member to alter the language or stipulations in a bill or act. It is voted on in the same manner as a bill.

Appropriation Bill. Grants the actual money usually approved by authorization bills, but not necessarily the total amount permissible. An appropriation bill originates in the House, and normally is not acted on until its authorization measure is enacted.

Authorization Bill. Authorizes a program, specifies its general aim and conduct, and, unless "open-ended," puts a ceiling on monies that can be used to finance it. Usually enacted before the related appropriation bill, which actually makes money available, is passed.

Bills. Most legislative proposals before Congress are in the form of bills, and are designated as H.R. (House of Representatives) or S. (Senate) according to the body in which they originate and by a number assigned in the order in which they were introduced, from the beginning of each two-year congressional term. "Public bills" deal with general questions, and become Public Laws if approved by Congress and signed by the President. Any number of Members may join in introducing a single bill. "Private bills," introduced with declining frequency in recent years, deal with individual matters such as claims against the government, immigration and naturalization cases, land titles, and the like, and become Private Laws if approved and signed.

Bills Referred. When introduced, a bill is referred to the committee (or committees) having jurisdiction over the subject covered by the bill. Bills are referred by the Speaker of the House and the Presiding Officer in the Senate on advice of the Parliamentarian, according to House and Senate rules. In the House, committees may appeal these decisions.

By Request. Measures can be submitted with the phrase "by request," a term found on bills and resolutions introduced or submitted at the request of the Administration or private organizations or individuals, following the name of the sponsor. Such proposals, though introduced as a courtesy, are not necessarily favored by the Members sponsoring them.

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Calendar. An agenda of pending business before committees or either Chamber.

Chamber. Meeting place for the total membership of either the House or Senate, as distinguished from the respective committee rooms.

Cloture. A method by which filibuster can be ended in the Senate. In most cases, a filibuster may be limited if a cloture motion, signed by 16 Senators, is agreed to by at least three-fifths of all Senators. After cloture is invoked, there are 30 hours for debate, roll calls, quorum calls, and other procedural matters. The Senate then votes on all questions still pending, followed by a final vote on the bill.

Companion Bill. A bill introduced in one House, often identical to legislation submitted in the other.

Concurrent Resolution. Designated H. Con. Res. or S. Con Res., it must be adopted by both Houses but does not require the signature of the President. A concurrent resolution does not have the force of law; instead, it generally is used to make or amend rules applicable to both Houses, or to express the sentiment of the two Houses. For example, it might be used to convey the congratulations of Congress to another country on the anniversary of its independence, or fix time for adjournment of Congress.

Conference. A meeting between committee members ("conferees") of the House and Senate to reconcile differences over provisions of a bill.

Congressional Record. The transcript of debate and proceedings in both the House and Senate Chambers, printed daily when Congress is in session.

Consent Calendar. Noncontroversial reported bills may be placed on the Consent Calendar and brought up on the first and third Mondays of each month in the House of Representatives. Objection by three or more Members will strike the bill from the Consent Calendar. A bill also may be passed over without prejudice to a later date. A bill killed on the Consent Calendar may still be brought to the floor under other procedures.

Continuing Resolution. When a fiscal year ends without an approved appropriation for each executive department or agency for the following fiscal year, a continuing resolution is enacted allowing departments to spend at a specified rate—usually the previous year's spending level.

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Discharge a Committee. Relieve a committee from jurisdiction over a measure before it that has not been reported.

Discharge Motion. A parliamentary procedure in the House that discharges a committee from considering a bill. If a petition is signed by a majority of all House Members (218) and the motion is then passed by a majority, the bill is brought to the floor for consideration without being reported by the committee.

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Enacting Clause. A legally required phrase at the beginning of all bills and resolutions, without which legislation could not be enacted. The clause reads: "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives assembled" If adopted, a motion to strike the enacting clause kills the bill.

Engrossed Bill. The final copy of a bill as passed by one House, with all the amendments agreed to by Members, and certified by the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate. At this point the measure technically becomes an act (not yet effective as a law), but it nonetheless continues to be generally referred to as a bill.

Enrolled Bill. The precise, final bill as passed in identical form by both Houses of Congress. The enrolled bill is printed on parchment and signed by an officer of the House of origin (House Clerk or Senate Secretary). It is then examined for accuracy by officials of the House in which it originated, and finally sent on for signatures of the House Speaker, the Senate President, and the President of the United States.

Executive Calendar. Published by the Executive Clerk, this non-legislative calendar lists presidential documents, such as nominations and treaties, which have been reported by committees and are pending action by the Senate as a whole.

Executive Communications. Messages from the President and executive agencies to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, usually requesting legislation, making a report, or expressing a view on problems and policies.

Executive Session. A meeting of a congressional committee—or even the entire Chamber—that can be attended only by the group's members or those invited: an expert witness, for example, or other Members of Congress. This should not be confused with another, more specific term: Executive Session of the Senate. The executive business of the Senate includes both nominations and treaties submitted to Congress by the President for that Chamber's advice and consent. Such executive business is handled differently than legislative business; for one thing, there is a separate Executive Calendar. When an Executive Session of the Senate is held, that body meets—either in open or closed session—to consider business on this Executive Calendar.

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Filibuster. A time-honored Senate tradition, the filibuster is a way of balancing minority rights with the principle of rule by the majority. By threatening unlimited debate, a Senator or group of Senators can force the majority to amend or even abandon a particular piece of legislation. A filibuster can last for many days, and is a tactic of last resort for a determined minority. By invoking cloture (see above), a procedure under Senate rules, a filibuster can be halted.

Fiscal Year. The government's bookkeeping year, which runs from October 1 to September 30 of the following year. The date of the fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends. For example, fiscal year 1985, often written FY85, began October 1, 1984 and ended September 30, 1985.

Floor. Literally, the floor of the Chamber in which the House or Senate meets. Figuratively, the term refers to the place in which matters are considered by the full House or Senate.

Floor Manager. A Member, usually representing sponsors of a bill, responsible for trying to steer a piece of legislation through floor debate and amendment to passage. A floor manager is often the chairman of the full committee or subcommittee that reported the bill. In this role, he is responsible for allocating the time granted supporters of the bill for debate. The minority leader or the ranking minority member of the committee often apportions time for the minority party's participation in the debate, even if he favors the legislation.

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Germane. Pertaining to the subject matter of the measure at hand. All House amendments must be germane to the bill or to the amendment to which offered, and a non-germane amendment can be stricken with a point of order. The Senate requires that amendments be germane only when they are being considered under cloture, or, often, when proceeding under an agreement to limit debate.

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House. The familiar term for the House of Representatives, as distinct from the Senate; each body, however, is a "House" of Congress.

House Calendar. A listing of public bills, other than direct or indirect appropriations or revenue measures, reported from committee and awaiting action by the House of Representatives.

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Joint Meeting of Congress. A ceremonial occasion when both Houses recess and meet together, distinguished from a joint session in that business is not in order. Since only the President may address a joint session, other dignitaries, on ceremonial occasions such as State visits, may address a joint meeting of Congress.

Joint Resolution. Designated by H.J. Res. or S.J. Res., it requires the approval of both Houses and (with one exception) the signature of the President, and has the force of law if approved. There is no real difference between a bill and joint resolution. Joint resolutions also are used to propose amendments to the Constitution, but do not require presidential signatures; they become part of the Constitution when ratified by three-fourths of the states.

Joint Session. An occasion upon which both Houses of Congress meet together (traditionally in the House Chamber) to receive a message from the President or count electoral ballots. Joint sessions are considered business sessions of Congress, as distinguished from the ceremonial joint meetings.

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Lame Duck Session. A session of Congress, called after a general congressional election between November and January 3, that includes Members who have been defeated or are returning.

Law. (see *Act*)

Legislative Day. The period of time from the meeting of either House following an adjournment until its next adjournment. The House usually adjourns from day to day, so legislative days and calendar days usually coincide. But the legislative day in the Senate often runs for many calendar days, as the Senate often recesses—rather than adjourns—from day to day.

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Majority Leader. The chief strategist and floor spokesman for the majority party in the House or Senate. He is elected by his party colleagues meeting in caucus or conference.

Majority Whip. The assistant leader in the House or Senate. His job is to help keep track of all important political legislation and try to have party members present when key measures are to be voted on.

Marking Up a Bill. Going through a measure, in committee or subcommittee, section by section—revising language, adding amendments, and so forth. If the measure is extensively revised, the new version may be introduced as a separate bill, with a new number.

Minority Leader. Floor leader for the minority party. (see *Majority Leader*)

Minority Whip. Performs duties of the whip for the minority party. (see *Majority Whip*)

Motion. A formal proposal, often presented in writing, on which a vote must be taken in the affirmative in order to move it forward.

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Notice Quorum Call. In the Committee of the Whole, a notice quorum call may be ordered by the Chairman when a point of order is made that a quorum is not present. If 100 House Members—who constitute a quorum in the Committee of the Whole—appear within the specified time period, the notice quorum call is not recorded. If 100 Members fail to appear, a regular quorum call, which is recorded, is made.

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Override a Veto. If the President disapproves a bill and sends it back to Congress with his objections, Congress may override his veto by a two-thirds vote in each Chamber. The Constitution requires a ye-a-and-nay vote.

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Parliamentarian. The rules expert charged with advising the presiding officer on questions of procedure.

Parliamentary Inquiry. A question from a Member to the chair seeking clarification on a procedural matter. A Member who holds the floor may yield for that purpose and the chair will render an opinion.

Point of Order. In effect, an objection raised by a Member that the pending proceedings are in violation of some rule of the Chamber and, at the same time, a demand for immediate return to the regular order.

President of the Senate. The Constitution designates the Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of the Senate. Normally, the Vice President only presides over the Senate if an upcoming vote is expected to be close, because he can vote to break a tie. In his absence, the President *pro tempore* (president for the time being) presides.

President Pro Tempore. The President *pro tempore* (also known as president *pro tem*) is responsible for presiding over the Senate in the absence of the Vice President; he also oversees the day-to-day operations of the Senate. The President *pro tem* is elected by his fellow Senators. Traditionally, the Senator of the majority party with the longest continuous service is elected.

Presiding Officer. Any Member of the Senate designated by the President *pro tempore* to preside during Senate sessions. Customarily, majority party Members preside, normally for one hour at a time.

Previous Question. In this sense, a “question” is an “issue” before the House for a vote, and the issue is “previous” when some other topic has superseded it in the attention of the Chamber. A motion for the previous question, when carried, has the effect of cutting off all debate and amendments and forcing a vote on the subject originally at hand. If, however, the previous question is moved and carried before there has been any debate on the subject at hand, and the subject is debatable, 40 minutes of debate is allowed before the vote. The previous question is sometimes moved to prevent amendments from being introduced and voted on.

Private Calendar. Private House bills dealing with individual matters such as claims against the government, immigration, and land titles are put on this calendar. Two Members may block consideration of a private bill in the Chamber. If blocked, it is then recommitted to committee.

Privileged Question. Privileged questions are issues which the rules of each House give special priority over other items of business. It is a general rule in Congress, for example, that the question first moved and seconded shall be voted on first. But this rule gives way to what may be called privileged questions, which may temporarily supersede a pending question or require recognition by the chair. This is to be distinguished from a preferential motion. A motion to refer, for instance, may, under certain circumstances, be superseded by a motion to table, and a vote would be forced on the latter motion only. But a motion to adjourn takes precedence over all others, and is thus considered the “highest privilege.”

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Questions of Privilege. These are matters addressable by resolution affecting the rights of Congress collectively—its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings, including such matters as admission to the floor, the conduct of officers and employees, and the unauthorized release of information to the me-

dia; it also includes the rights, reputation, and conduct of individual Members in their representative capacity. Questions of "personal privilege" relate to individual Members of Congress. A Member's rising to a question of personal privilege is given precedence over almost all other proceedings, except questions of privilege of the House.

Quorum. The number of Members required for the transaction of business. In the Senate and House, it is a simple majority of the membership (when there are no vacancies, 51 in the Senate and 218 in the House). A quorum is 100 in the Committee of the Whole House. Failure to achieve a quorum is cause for adjournment.

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Recess. Each House may find it necessary to suspend its business for short or indefinite periods of time during a legislative day. Unlike adjournment, a recess does not end a legislative day and, as such, does not interfere with unfinished business. The House usually adjourns from day to day. The Senate often recesses from day to day rather than adjourn, so that a legislative day may encompass several calendar days.

Recommit to Committee. A motion to send a bill back to the committee that reported it. Generally speaking, a motion to recommit, if adopted, means the end of floor consideration of the bill unless the motion is accompanied by instructions to report back "forthwith."

Recommit to Committee with Instructions. A motion to send a bill back to the committee that reported it, with specific instructions to report it back to the floor "forthwith"—usually within a specified time period and with certain modifications, amendments, deletions, and so forth.

Reconsider a Vote. Each body has procedures for reconsidering votes that it takes. Under the rules of each House, no vote is in itself conclusive until a motion to reconsider has been disposed of. In the House it may be made only by a Member who voted on the prevailing side of the original question, and must be entered either on the same day or on the next succeeding day the House is in session. In the Senate the motion may be made only by a Member who voted on the prevailing side of the question or by a Member who did not vote at all.

Report. A "report" is the document setting forth the committee's explanation of its action. House and Senate reports are numbered separately and designated S. Rept. or H. Rept. Conference reports are numbered and designated in the same way as regular committee reports.

Most reports favor a bill's passage. Adverse reports are occasionally submitted, but more often, when a committee disapproves a bill, it simply fails to "report" it at all to the full House or Senate. When a committee report is not unanimous, the dissenting committee members may file a statement of their views, which is referred to as a minority report. Members also may file "supplemental" or "additional" views. Sometimes a bill is reported without recommendation.

Reporting a Rule. (see *Rule*)

Resolutions. Simple resolutions, designated by H. Res. or S. Res., deal with matters entirely within the prerogatives of either the House or Senate, and require neither passage by the other Chamber nor approval by the President. They do not have the force of law, and most deal with the rules or sense of one House. (see *Concurrent Resolution*, *Joint Resolution*)

Rule. The term has two different congressional meanings. The Constitution provides that each House may determine the rules of its proceedings—the order in which it considers legislation, for example, voting procedures, duties of its officers, and so forth. These are all stipulated in the Chamber's book of rules.

A second meaning is specific to the House of Representatives. The House Rules Committee not only makes recommendations to the House on its rules, but also makes recommendations to the House on the handling of a particular bill on the floor. The committee affects the order of business by reporting resolutions that make it possible for the body to begin acting on a bill on the House or Union Calendar. These resolutions are known as special orders or simply as "rules."

Each special rule also proposes a set of ground rules for debating and amending a particular bill. For example, a special rule may impose limitations on the amendments that Members can propose to a bill, or it may allow an amendment to be offered that violates a standing rule of the House. The House as a whole decides by majority vote whether to accept, reject, or modify each special rule proposed by the Rules Committee.

The Senate Committee on Rules and Administration also considers possible changes in the standing rules of the Senate, but it has no role in determining the order of business on the Senate floor.

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Sergeant at Arms. The officer charged with maintaining order in the Chamber, under the direction of the presiding officer.

Session. Each Congress is composed of two sessions. A new session of Congress begins each January 3 at noon and continues until adjourned "sine die." (see *Adjournment Sine Die*)

Speaker. The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected by its members.

Special Session. A session of Congress, convened by the President of the United States or the leadership of both parties, after Congress has adjourned *sine die*. (see *Lame Duck Session*)

Strike Out the Last Word. A motion entitling Members of the House to speak for five minutes on a measure then being debated in the Chamber. A Member

gains recognition by moving to strike out the last word of the amendment or section of the bill then under consideration—only a formality to address the House.

Sponsor. The Member who introduces a bill, amendment, motion, and the like.

Substitute. An amendment, or sometimes the text of an entire bill, introduced in place of the pending text. Passage of a substitute measure eliminates the original language by replacing it. Under certain circumstances, a substitute may be amended before being adopted.

Supplemental Appropriation. An appropriation to cover the difference between an agency's regular appropriation and the amount that becomes necessary for it to operate for the full fiscal year, because of new laws or obligations.

Suspension of the Rules. A time-saving House procedure for passing bills, usually reserved for noncontroversial measures. The motion, if agreed to by two-thirds of those present in the Chamber, suspends all rules which would otherwise prevent consideration of the pending matter. Debate is limited to 40 minutes and no amendments from the floor may be offered. If a two-thirds favorable vote is not attained, the bill may be considered later under regular procedures. This parliamentary procedure is in order only on Mondays and Tuesdays.

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Table a Bill. An adverse procedure used by both bodies to lay to rest a matter they don't want to consider. A motion to "lay on the table" is not debatable in either House. Motions to table may be reconsidered.

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Unanimous Consent Agreement. A procedure used frequently in both Houses to advance a proposition without resorting to the established rules of procedure. A single objection thwarts the unanimous consent agreement.

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Veto. The refusal by the President to approve a bill or joint resolution submitted to him by Congress, other than one proposing an amendment to the Constitution. When Congress is in session, the President has 10 days in which to sign a bill, excluding Sundays; if he does not sign it, the bill automatically becomes law. When the President vetoes a bill, he returns it to the House of origin with a message stating his objections. In this case, it may be voted on again by Congress and, if approved by a two-thirds vote in both Houses, it becomes law despite the President's veto. (see *Override a Veto*)

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Without Objection. (see *Unanimous Consent Agreement*)

